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Insights From NSSO Data**

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## **Female Labour Migration in India : Insights From NSSO Data**

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### **Abstract**

*The objective of this working paper is to examine the extent of employment oriented migration of females in India and the inter –state variations in its magnitude using NSSO 55<sup>th</sup> Round Household level data on Migration . It is found that though the percentage is very small for ‘employment oriented migration’ an analysis of work force participation of female migrants in the age group 15-60 , irrespective of the reasons for migration reveals that in the post migration period work participation of these migrants increases steeply in all the states. Though marriage is identified as the reason for migration they work prior to and after migration which is not brought to limelight. In the recent past ‘independent migration’ of females is on the increase in response to the employment opportunities in export industries, electronic assembling and garment units. The extent of this independent migration is arrived at indirectly using proxy variables such as the ‘never married’ category among the migrants and those who identified themselves as ‘heads’. In all the states in South India this percentage is high .In the north at the disaggregated level the percentage of ‘never married’ and “heads” is high in rural urban and urban –urban migration . The issues and challenges to be faced are highlighted and this paper concludes that gender dimensions should adequately be captured in the official data system for purposes of effective policy interventions.*

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## **Female Labour Migration in India : Insights From NSSO Data**

### **Introduction**

Of late labour migration is getting feminized especially in developing countries. (U.N., 2004, Karlekar, 1995, Fawcett et al, 1984, Fernandez Kelly & Patricia, 1983) Trade liberalization and market orientation have had far reaching consequences on the pattern of demand for labour. In many developing countries export led economic growth and an invitation to foreign capital have given a big boost to electronic, chemical, information technology and garment industries which by and large employ significant number of females. While the international changes have had favorable impact on the highly skilled professional educated manpower, unskilled uneducated casual labour-force faces an increasingly competitive labour market for a comparatively low wage under undesirable working conditions. Since women are ready to work for any wage, and perceived as passive and docile, they are in great demand, contributing to feminization of labour and feminization of labour migration.<sup>1</sup> No doubt these labour market changes have had their impact on rural-urban migration as well, female economic migration being more pronounced in the recent ten to fifteen years. Changes in the rural economy also have contributed to this increased female migration. Increasing productivity in agriculture has been associated with decreasing opportunities for wage employment in agriculture for women when compared to that of men. Literature pertaining to India as well as South-East Asian Countries clearly indicates that the initial opposition to women's migration had been overcome after seeing the remittances from women who migrated earlier, and the crucial role played by such remittances in the survival of rural households in this age of consumerism and commercialization.<sup>2</sup> But unfortunately gender issues are not considered important in migration studies.

### **Types of Female Migration**

The real world phenomenon indicates three distinct types of female migration (Fawcett et al, 1984) (a) Autonomous female migration: Many middle and upper middle class women migrate to cities for improving their educational credentials and also to get suitable employment apparently in a quest for social advancement and also to enhance their status in the marriage market.<sup>3</sup> Among the semi-literate, young girls migrating to towns/cities to work in export processing units, garment industry, electronic assembling and food processing units is continuously on the increase in the recent years; (b) Relay migration: To augment family income, families which have some land holdings in the rural area, send the daughters to work mostly as domestic servants where they are safe in the custody of a mistress. First the elder daughter is sent out and she is replaced by the second, third and so on, as one by one get married.; (C) Family migration: Here the wife instead of staying back in the village prefers to join her husband in the hope of getting some employment in the destination area. Family migration among agricultural wage labourers who have no land or other assets to fall back at times of crisis is becoming increasingly common. Moreover in the poorest groups male dominance is generally tempered by women's contribution and marriage works in a more inter-dependency mode. It is such groups which migrate in family units to urban destinations in search of employment prospects for both.

### **Studies on Female Migration: An Over-view**

Over the years the literature on migration has grown in volume and variety in response to the unfolding complexities of migratory processes. Though women's employment oriented migration is on the increase, only few studies discuss the movement of women in detail especially in relation to poverty. The work of Connell et al (1976) the earliest of the studies in migration

contains a detailed discussion on women's migration. Fernandez-Kelly (1983) and Khoo (1984) concentrate on women and work both migrant and non-migrant in the world's labour force. They discuss the problem in the wider context of problem of feminisation of the work force, de-skilling and devaluation of manufacturing work.

In recent literature female migration is linked to gender specific patterns of labour demand in cities. In both South East Asian and Latin American cities plenty of opportunities are available to women in the services and industrial sectors especially with the rise of export processing in these regions. (Fernandez –Kelly 1983, Hayzer 1982, Khoo 1984 and studies on South East Asian Labour migration) It has been established that women are no longer mere passive movers who followed the household head (Fawcett et al 1984, Rao, 1986). In fact daughters are sent to towns to work as domestic servants (Arizpe, 1981). From an early age girls become economically independent living on their own in the cities and sending remittances home. This kind of move has been characterized by Veena Thadani and Michael Todaro (1984) as 'autonomous female migration' and has resulted in Thadani-Todaro model of migration.<sup>4</sup> However studies indicate that the independent movement of young women in South Asia and Middle East as labour migrants is very rare and associated with derogatory status connotations. (Connell et al, 1976, Fawcett et al 1984).

But with trade liberalization and new economic policies, gender specific labour demand has motivated many young Asian women to join the migration streams in groups or with their families to cash-in the opportunity.<sup>5</sup> Kabeer (2000) in her study finds Bangladeshi women (with a long tradition of female seclusion) taking up jobs in garment factories and joining the labour markets of Middle East and South East Asian Countries. A study of 387 female labour

migrants from South East Asia, Thailand, the Philippines and China finds positive impacts on women (Chantavanich, 2001). Another research (Gamburd, 2000) concludes that despite some unpleasant situations, none of the women she interviewed felt that the risks of going abroad outweighed the benefits. Recent migration research shows that female migrants constitute roughly half of all internal migrants in developing countries. In some regions they even outnumber men (Hugo, 1993).

In the Indian context it is not clear whether wage employment has helped them to overcome poverty since for an outsider there is nothing emancipating in bad working conditions, low wages, over-work and discrimination. The limited research studies that are available in the Indian context for the earlier periods indicate that these women are exposed more to the risk of sexual harassment and exploitation (Acharya, 1987 and Saradmoni, 1995). They often have to work till the last stages of pregnancy and have to resume work soon after child birth exposing themselves and the child to considerable danger (Bremen, 1985). Women migrant workers in sugarcane cutting, work almost twenty hours a day (Teerink, 1995) Female labour mostly from Kerala in the fish processing industries in Gujarat are subject to various forms of hardship and exploitation at the hands of their superiors (Saradmoni, 1995). With the entry of more and younger women in the export processing zones, market segmentation is being accentuated, female dominant jobs are being devalued, degraded and least paid. Though this does not augur well with women development it has not deterred women from contributing to family survival and studies are not wanting which highlight that it is women who settle down in the labour market as flower/fruit vendors, domestic servants and allow the men to find a suitable job leisurely or improve their skill (Shanthi, 1993). Case studies indicate that it is the men who were 'associational migrants' and not the women. Families had migrated in



response to female economic opportunity (as domestic servants, as vegetable vendors, flower vendors in front of the temple etc) and they are the primary or equal earners, male employment often being irregular and uncertain.<sup>6</sup> While entry barriers are many in male jobs (in the form of 'informal property rights) and the waiting period is long it is not so in the case of female jobs where they have easy entry and exit in domestic service and personalized services (Premi, 2001, Meher, 1994 and Shanthi, 1993, 1991). Their earnings may be low but crucial for family survival. They get paid in 'kind' as well, which help to combat malnutrition especially among infants.

### **Causes for invisibility of women in National Surveys**

But it is a pity that national level large scale surveys are unable to capture the above reality. With the result women are treated still as secondary earners, invisible in the official data system, and consequently no policy measures are directed to alleviate the sufferings of these migrant women who lack even basic amenities in the destination area. Why large scale national surveys underscore female migration is attributed to certain reasons. The respondents are required to give only one reason for migration and in the case of women invariably the reason for migration is identified with marriage. The woman may be working prior to marriage and intend to get married with an urbanite to enhance her potential for employment but it does not get captured. Moreover in the Indian cultural setting it is inappropriate for a woman to emphasize her economic role especially if the interviewer is a stranger and a male. When male members answer the question, women's employment is underplayed. Moreover the emphasis on primary and full time work and longer reference period often lead to underestimation of female employment. If women's jobs are extensions of domestic jobs then they are not even acknowledged as 'jobs'. Depending on the respondent's and enumerator's perception and gender sensitivity, women's work force participation and

economic contribution get captured or not. Questions as to who migrated first, whether the male or the female and in associational migration whether women's employment opportunity was reckoned or not at the time of migration etc are not posed to the sample population and hence it is difficult to identify 'autonomous female migrants'. Despite these shortcomings, in the absence of any other data on migration, one has to necessarily depend on the Census and the NSSO the two sources of data for migration. The 2001 Census data on Migration was not published at the time of writing the current research paper and so NSSO 55<sup>th</sup> Round data had been used.

### **The Objectives and Scope of the Study**

The scope of the study is restricted to Household level data of NSSO 55<sup>th</sup> Round on Migration. NSSO collects data on both temporary and long term migrants. It collects information on the number of persons whose place of enumeration was their usual place of residence but who stayed away from their villages/towns for 60 days or more for employment or in search of employment and this category mostly refers to temporary/circular migrants. Since our focus is on long term migrants, we have considered only the second category in this paper.

The second category refers to long term migrants and they are referred to as 'migrants' in the NSSO report. It defines these migrants as 'a member of the sample household if he/she had stayed continuously for at least six months or more in a place (village/town) other than the village/town where he/she was enumerated'. These long term migrants were identified through Column 13 of Block 4 of Schedule 10 of the Household Slips if the answer is 'yes' for the question 'whether the place of enumeration differs from last usual place of residence'.

The Objectives of this research piece are to (a) highlight inter-state differentials in the magnitude composition and pattern of female migration (b) examine the extent of employment oriented migration of female migrants in the working age group and (c) examine the economic activity pattern of all female migrants even if the cause has been identified as 'marriage' or 'movement of parents'.

### **Structure and Composition of Female Migrant Population**

As the focus is on the economic activity of the female migrants, the women migrants in the age group 15-60 were separated from the total female migrant population for each of the major fourteen states (The undivided M.P., U.P. and Bihar have been considered). The female migrants so identified were classified on the basis of their movement i.e. those who moved within the same district (intra-district), those who moved to another district but within the same state (inter-district or intra-state) those who moved into the state from other states and those who moved from other countries.

Marriage is a dominant factor in female mobility and due to the custom of marrying off women within the close circle which does not normally involve long distance migration we find 60-70% of migration taking place within the same district. (Table 1) (Col 2) Another 15-30% of migration takes place outside the district (Col 3) but within the same state, obviously for caste/class/religion/language reasons. Thus 85-95% of female migration takes place within the state (Col 4).

Coming to female migrants from other states (inter-state) (Col 5) Haryana (16.3%) Punjab (15.8%) and Maharashtra (15.2%) top the list with more than 15% of the migrants from other states. The reasons could be numerous. Punjab and Haryana being neighbour states, inter-state movement

is perhaps high. Being prosperous states they also do attract migrants from other nearby backward states both men and women-women in the status of spouse or as employment seekers. Maharashtra is one among the very few states which attracts migrants from almost all over India. In all the three cases prosperity and employment potential are the major reasons for in-migration. Karnataka, West Bengal and Tamil Nadu take the fourth, fifth and sixth positions respectively. Rajasthan and Gujarat have 8.7% and 8.1% respectively. In-migration from other states is the least for Orissa, Bihar and U.P. The obvious reason is backwardness of these states. Women development is so poor in these states that one cannot expect women from other states to enter into these states either on grounds of marriage or employment. M.P. contrary to our expectation has 10% of the migrants from other states, may be due to its location (Col 5). The problem here is while we have data on in-migrants into a particular state (say Tamil Nadu) we have no data on out-migrants from that state. This means Tamil Nadu women who migrate to U.P. or Gujarat are analysed as migrants of that destination state but whose behaviour may be different from the behaviour of local migrants of that state. Moreover in-migration from other states constitutes less than 10% of total migrants for all the states except for Haryana, Punjab and Maharashtra. So we have restricted our further analysis to intra-district and inter-district migrants only.

The percentage of female migrants from other countries is an insignificant figure (Col 6). Except for West Bengal which is close to Bangladesh, no other state receives more than one percent of the total women migrants from other countries. In the case of West Bengal, women from Bangladesh enter legally and illegally in search of employment and also for marriage because of the porous borders. Next to West Bengal, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka receive women migrants from other countries, may be from

Sri Lanka. Of late Tamil Nadu attracts lot of foreign students which includes women as well and this could be one of the reasons. The percentages are 0.83 and 0.76 respectively.

**Table 1**  
**Magnitude and Pattern of Internal Female Migration**  
**(percent)**

State	Intra-District	Inter-District	Total	From other states	From other countries
<b>Central Region</b>					
M.P.	64.2	25.6	<b>89.8</b>	10	0.08
U.P	62	32.3	<b>94.3</b>	5.4	0.35
<b>Northern Region</b>					
Haryana	42.11	41.23	<b>83.3</b>	<b>16.3</b>	0.41
Punjab	50	33.7	<b>83.7</b>	<b>15.8</b>	0.5
Rajasthan	66.9	24.3	<b>91.2</b>	8.7	0
<b>Western Region</b>					
Gujarat	63	28.6	<b>91.6</b>	8.1	0.33
Maharashtra	54.1	30.6	<b>84.7</b>	<b>15.2</b>	0.16
<b>Eastern Region</b>					
Bihar	66.9	27.9	<b>94.8</b>	5.2	0
Orissa	76.1	19.2	<b>95.3</b>	4.7	0
W.Bengal	71.9	18.5	<b>90.4</b>	7.1	<b>2.4</b>
<b>Southern Region</b>					
A.P.	70.8	22.6	<b>93.4</b>	6.5	0
Karnataka	70	20.5	<b>90.5</b>	9.4	0.11
Kerala	76.4	17.5	<b>93.9</b>	5.3	<b>0.76</b>
Tamil Nadu	58.6	34.5	<b>93.1</b>	6.1	<b>0.83</b>

**Source :** (Computed from) Household Survey Data of NSSO 55<sup>th</sup> Round.

The Rural-Rural (RR), Urban-Rural (UR), Rural-Urban (RU) and Urban-Urban (UU) classification for the identified female migrants is available in Table 2. This table reveals the following:

**Table 2**  
**Magnitude of Rural -Rural, Urban-Rural , Rural-Urban and Urban -**  
**Urban Migration**

(percent)

State	RR	UR	RU	UU
1	2	3	4	5
<b>Central Region</b>				
M.P.	63.6	3.1	17.7	15.6
Excluding	67	3	17	13.2
U.P	69	4	15	12
Excluding	70.8	3.6	14.8	10.8
<b>Northern Region</b>				
Haryana	34.5	2.9	33.9	28.7
Excluding	34.5	2.2	34.6	28.7
Punjab	54.4	5.1	19	21.5
Excluding	58.2	5.1	17.2	19.5
Rajasthan	64.7	4.1	16.1	15
Excluding	67.2	3.7	15.8	13.2
<b>Western Region</b>				
Gujarat	49.2	4.6	25	21.1
Excluding	52.7	4.9	23.2	19.2
Maharashtra	46.1	5.3	28.1	20.3
(Excluding	51.8	5.9	23.5	18.8
<b>Eastern Region</b>				
Bihar	75.8	3.1	1313	8.2
Excluding	77	2.8		7.3
Orissa	77.2	2.9	14.3	5.5
Excluding	79.1	2.5	13.3	5.1
W.Bengal	58.6	3.5	19.3	18.5
Excluding	61.7	3.5	16.4	18.3
<b>Southern Region</b>				
A.P.	54	6	25.1	14.9
Excluding	55.8	3.8	25.3	13.1
Karnataka	54.8	5.5	20.3	19.4
Excluding	58	5.2	19.8	17
Kerala	50.1	6.6	27.3	15.2
Excluding	52.4	5.6	27.7	14.2
Tamil Nadu	46.7	7.1	23.7	22.5
Excluding	48.1	7	23.4	21.5

**Source :** (Computed from ) Household Survey Data of NSSO 55<sup>th</sup> Round

**Note :** "Excluding" refers to migrants exclusive of in-migrants from other states and other countries.

- \* In backward states (in terms of women development as well) like Orissa, Bihar , Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan rural-rural migration is dominant (Col 2).
- \* In developed states (and also where women development is comparatively better) by and large, rural-rural migration is less.
- \* Uniformly in all southern states rural-rural migration is half and less than half of total migration.
- \* Urban-rural migration (reverse migration) as one would normally expect, plays an insignificant role and falls between 2.9 and 7.1% of total migration (Col 3).
- \* The percentage of rural-urban migrants (Col 4) varies across states the prosperous , comparatively urbanized states exhibiting higher percentage of rural-urban migration (Haryana, Maharashtra, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka) . Punjab and West Bengal have around 19%. The backward states (Bihar, Orissa, U.P., Rajasthan and M.P.) have poor rural- urban migration.
- \* Urban- urban migration is again high in urbanized states. Among the southern states Tamil Nadu tops the list in urban migration followed by Karnataka.
- \* The proportion of rural-rural migrants is the least for Haryana compared to other states but in rural-urban and urban-urban migration Haryana tops the list.
- \* If we exclude in-migrants from other states and from other countries then the percentage of RR migrant stream goes up and that of RU and UU streams goes down uniformly for all the states, the exception being Haryana.

### **Independent Migration of Females**

A perusal of historical trends in migration in India would clearly reveal male selective migration in 1970s and 1980s, family migration (where women also join the migration stream instead of staying back in the village) in 1990s and from late 1990s onwards, independent female migration in response to employment opportunities in the semi-urban and urban areas in addition to male selective and family migration. In South East Asia from an early age girls become economically independent living on their own in the cities and sending remittances home. In South Asia, where a woman's movement as labour migrant used to be rare and associated with derogatory status, a change in migratory pattern is observed since the early 1990s. In India economic liberalisation and in particular trade liberalization has created gender specific labour demand where women either migrate in groups or with their families to avail the newly found opportunity (Shanthi, 1991 and Sardamoni, 1995). More importantly the setting up of export processing zones not only changed the pattern of female migration but also increased the proportion of women in the labour force who are mainly in paid employment. The preference for women employees on the part of employers is mainly because women accepted lower wage, are not unionised and do not protest much against unpleasant working conditions.

But from NSSO data one cannot answer the question whether independent migration of females is on the increase since details on who migrated first, whether alone or with peer group/family and who took the decision to migrate are not furnished. But one can tentatively arrive at the magnitude of 'autonomous female migration' indirectly by using 'marital status' and 'relationship to head' as proxy variables and this is what we have attempted in our analysis here.



Both macro level data i.e. data pertaining to all the female migrants in the age group 15-60 and disaggregated data i.e. female migrants classified on the basis of their movement as Rural-Rural (RR) Rural-Urban (RU) and Urban-Urban (UU) (excluding migrants from other states and other countries) have been used to gain necessary insights into the behavioural patterns of female migrants.

The marital status of the women in the age group 15-59 for the major fourteen states in India for all female migrants put together reveals that both for developed and developing states 90-94% of the women are married. (Column 3 of Table 3). However the figures are slightly lower for all the southern states and West Bengal.

**Table 3**  
**Marital Status and Relationship to Head of Women in Sample Migrant Households**  
**(for all streams of migrants) (Percent)**

Major States	Marital Status				Relationship to Head			
	Never Married	Married	Widowed	Divorced/ Separated	Self	Spouse of Head	Spouse of Married child	Others
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
<b>Central Region</b>								
Madhya Pradesh	<b>1.6</b>	92.5	<b>5.1</b>	0.7	<b>3</b>	62.9	24.3	9.8
Uttar Pradesh	<b>1.7</b>	93.4	<b>4.7</b>	0.3	<b>5.2</b>	58.3	25.8	10.7
<b>Northern Region</b>								
Haryana	<b>2.5</b>	92.7	<b>4.5</b>	0.3	<b>4.7</b>	6.2	24.6	8.7
Punjab	<b>2.2</b>	92.9	<b>4.7</b>	0.2	<b>5.4</b>	61.9	25	7.7
Rajasthan	<b>1.9</b>	92.9	<b>4.8</b>	0.4	<b>4.6</b>	60.9	24.7	9.8
<b>Western Region</b>								
Gujarat	<b>3.3</b>	91	<b>5</b>	0.6	<b>3.6</b>	65.9	21.1	9.4
Maharashtra	<b>4</b>	89	<b>5.8</b>	1.2	<b>4.7</b>	67	16.8	11.5
<b>Eastern Region</b>								
Bihar	<b>0.9</b>	94	<b>4.9</b>	0	<b>5.9</b>	60.4	25.8	7.9
Orissa	<b>2.8</b>	91	<b>5.5</b>	0.8	<b>5.9</b>	68.4	16.2	9.5
West Bengal	<b>3.0</b>	89.6	<b>6.8</b>	0.7	<b>5.1</b>	68.9	16.0	10.0
<b>Southern Region</b>								
Andhra Pradesh	<b>3.8</b>	87.9	<b>7.3</b>	1.1	<b>5.7</b>	70.4	14	9.9
Karnataka	<b>4</b>	88	<b>6.8</b>	1.2	<b>6.1</b>	62.9	19	12
Kerala	<b>6.2</b>	87.7	<b>5</b>	1.1	<b>9.4</b>	52.2	25.7	12.7
Tamil Nadu	<b>4.5</b>	86.7	<b>7.5</b>	1.3	<b>7.7</b>	70.3	12.3	9.7

**Source:** (Computed from) Household Survey data of NSSO 55<sup>th</sup> Round.

**Table 4**  
**Marital Status of Female Migrants of age 15-60 for RR, RU and UU migrant streams (Percent)**

Category	M.P	U.P	Haryana	Punjab	Rajasthan	Gujarat	Maharash	Bihar	Orissa	West	Andhra	Karnataka	Kerala	Tamil Nadu
<b>RR (intra district)</b>														
<b>Never married</b>	<b>0.6</b>	<b>0.7</b>	<b>0.8</b>	<b>1.2</b>	<b>0.4</b>	<b>0.7</b>	<b>1.4</b>	<b>0.2</b>	<b>1.2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1.7</b>	<b>1.7</b>	<b>3.3</b>	<b>1.6</b>
Currently married	94.1	94.4	93.1	93.8	94.2	93	91	94.6	92.4	91.8	89.8	89.1	90.5	89.1
Widowed/Divorced	5.3	4.9	6.8	5	5.4	6.3	6.6	5.2	6.4	7.2	8.5	9.2	6.1	9.3
<b>RR (inter district)</b>														
<b>Never married</b>	<b>1.3</b>	<b>0.6</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.6</b>	<b>0.8</b>	<b>1.2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0.4</b>	<b>1.7</b>	<b>0.6</b>	<b>0.6</b>	<b>2.8</b>	<b>5.6</b>	<b>1.2</b>
Currently married	91.2	94.6	94.6	95.7	93.4	93.7	94.4	95.2	91.8	94	91.7	85.8	88.9	89
Widowed/Divorced	7.5	4.8	5.4	3.6	5.8	5.1	4.5	4.3	5.5	5.4	7.7	11.4	5.5	9.8
<b>RU (intra district)</b>														
<b>Never married</b>	<b>3.3</b>	<b>3.9</b>	<b>3.3</b>	<b>2.7</b>	<b>3.1</b>	<b>3.3</b>	<b>6.4</b>	<b>3.6</b>	<b>5.5</b>	<b>4.8</b>	<b>4.7</b>	<b>4.2</b>	<b>5.1</b>	<b>5.6</b>
Currently married	89.1	90.4	91.4	89	91.6	91.4	85.1	90.9	88.1	87.2	84.5	87.9	88.8	84.6
Widowed/Divorced	7.7	5.7	5.3	8.2	5.2	5.3	8.5	5.5	6.5	8	10.8	7.9	6	9.8
<b>RU (inter district)</b>														
<b>Never married</b>	<b>1.3</b>	<b>1.9</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5.2</b>	<b>2.7</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3.7</b>	<b>1.7</b>	<b>10.3</b>	<b>5.7</b>	<b>3.3</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>11.3</b>	<b>6</b>
Currently married	91.6	93	88.8	89.6	93.4	88.8	86.7	93.2	86.7	82.4	88.2	86.3	84.5	84.9
Widowed/Divorced	7.1	5	8.2	5.2	3.9	8.2	9.6	5	3	11.8	8.6	7.7	4.3	9.1
<b>UU (intra district)</b>														
<b>Never married</b>	<b>2.7</b>	<b>5.1</b>	<b>8.6</b>	<b>1.4</b>	<b>6.2</b>	<b>8.6</b>	<b>7.7</b>	<b>3.4</b>	<b>7.6</b>	<b>5.1</b>	<b>9.5</b>	<b>6.6</b>	<b>8.4</b>	<b>5.7</b>
Currently married	91.7	89.3	87	93.2	88.8	87	85.4	91.5	87.4	88.5	83.7	87	85.3	84.1
Widowed/Divorced	5.7	5.7	4.4	5.3	5	4.4	6.9	5.1	5	6.4	6.8	6.4	6.3	10
<b>UU (inter district)</b>														
<b>Never married</b>	<b>5.6</b>	<b>4.8</b>	<b>5.6</b>	<b>4.2</b>	<b>6.2</b>	<b>5.6</b>	<b>8.5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>10.2</b>	<b>6.3</b>	<b>10.3</b>	<b>11.2</b>	<b>14.8</b>	<b>8.4</b>
Currently married	88.7	89.5	90.4	90	88.1	90.4	84.5	90.7	83.5	88.6	83.8	85.5	82.4	85.1
Widowed/Divorced	5.6	5.7	3.9	5.8	5.9	3.9	6.9	4.4	6.3	5.1	5.8	3.4	2.8	6.6

**Source:** (Computed from) Household Survey data of NSSO 55<sup>th</sup> Round

The 'never married' is the least in Bihar followed by M.P., U.P, and Rajasthan (Column 2). This is because girls are married at a comparatively young age in these states. Contrary to this the percentage of 'never married' is the highest in Kerala followed by Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh. In these states women's status is better and they are not married early. Their migration to the city could be attributed to the migration of the parents or with peer groups. But the fact to be reckoned is that, in the south, migration of young girls in response to changing economic opportunities is becoming common and this gets reflected in the higher percentage in the 'never married' category in the NSSO data.

The category wise (rural-rural, rural- urban and urban- urban) split up data for the major fourteen states on marital status is available in Table 4 This disaggregated data reveals the following:

- \* M.P. U.P and Rajasthan have lower figures for 'never-married' when compared to other states for almost all category of migrants.
- \* The 'never-married' is comparatively high in urban-urban migration category even in poorer, backward states and in states where women development is low. Whether it is rural-rural , rural- urban or urban- urban all the four southern states have comparatively higher percentage of never married

compared to all the other states excepting Orissa. Orissa resembles south India for the 'never married' category.

- \* The percentage of widows are more in rural- urban and urban-urban category of migrants indicating that widows join the migration stream to fend for themselves.
- \* The percentage of widowed /divorced is low in states where cultural restrictions are more when compared to other states especially southern states where women enjoy better status.

Higher percentages of 'never married' among rural- urban and urban- urban migrants in almost all the states particularly in southern states are indicative of the presence of young girls either as associational migrants or independent migrants. Here again the percentages are higher for inter-district when compared to intra-district migrants for almost all streams of migrants.

Our above conclusion is further reinforced when we consider Column 6 of Table 3, where under the relationship to 'head' the percentage of 'self' is quite high for southern states.

The distribution of women in the age group 15-59 on the basis of relationship to head indicates the following: (Column 6 of Table 3)

- Female headship is high in Southern states of Kerala (9.4%), Tamil Nadu (7.7%), Karnataka (6.1%) and Andhra Pradesh (5.7%). By and large it is low in northern states ranging from

3% in Madhya Pradesh to 5.9% in Bihar. Due to cultural reasons the widows and separated forming a separate household is less in north India while it is accepted in South India. The second reason as cited already is the new trend of young unmarried girls migrating for reasons of higher studies and employment.

- About 80-85% of the women in migrant households through out India are either spouse of the head or spouse of the married child. Due to the custom of marrying the girls at a very young age in North India, in many north Indian states 'spouse of the married child' constitutes about 25%. It is low in South India ranging from 12-19% only. Orissa and Maharashtra from the north are included in this list.
- The 'others' category which includes dependent mother, sister, sister-in law and mother-in -law varies between 7-11% among the states in India.

Rural-rural, rural-urban and urban-urban category wise figures for female heads are available in Table 5. This is more revealing. In this 'Relationship to Head' table once again we find a higher percentage of women reporting themselves as 'Head' (Self) in all categories (RR, RU, UU) for southern states.

In the western region of Haryana, Punjab and Rajasthan, the 'self' category is comparatively high in intra district rural- rural migration, medium in rural- urban migration especially in inter-district category and again high in urban- urban (intra district) migration.

In the central region among the rural- rural migrants the percentage of 'self' is low in M.P. but high in U.P. In rural urban migration the percentage is better for both the states but in urban-urban migration again the 'self' category is low for M.P. (intra district) and high for U.P.

Bihar, Orissa and West Bengal more or less exhibit the same behaviour, the 'self' being high in all categories of migrants. The micro level data indicates higher percentages for female heads when compared to what we get for aggregated female migrant population.

In the Western region of Gujarat and Maharashtra the percentage of 'self' is neither too low nor too high and inter-category differences are less.

**Table 5**  
**Females who are 'heads of household' (Relationship to Head is 'Self') (Percent)**

Category	M.P	U.P	Haryana	Punjab	Rajasthan	Gujarat	Maharashtra	Bihar	Orissa	West Bengal	Andhra Pradesh	Karnataka	Kerala	Tamil Nadu
<b>Intra-District</b>														
R-R	2	6.1	6.9	6.2	4.6	3.8	5	6.4	5.4	4.3	5.6	5.8	9	7.5
U-R	5.7	4.6	6.4	4.4	2.4	2	4.5	4.7	9	9.1	7.2	4	10.7	6.5
R-U	5.8	4.8	3.1	7	3.8	3.1	4.9	5.8	8.6	6	7.2	8.3	8.7	8.2
U-U	2.8	4.2	4	6.8	7.3	4	4.6	4.8	4.2	5.8	5.4	4.7	7.5	7.1
<b>Inter-district</b>														
RR	3.2	4.8	4.3	3.3	5.6	2	3.4	5.5	5.8	3.8	4.4	5.4	11.1	7.9
UR	4.3	3.8	2.1	9.1	5.6	4.5	4.6	3.8	7.1	4.8	1.9	5.5	18.2	6.5
RU	3.5	3	4.9	6.1	5.9	4.9	5.7	6.8	6.1	5.9	5.6	5.6	8.1	8.2
UU	4.7	4.1	2.2	4.8	3.7	2.2	5.5	4.4	7.1	6.3	4.3	6.1	8.5	7.5
<b>From Other States</b>														
RR	0.8	4.9	2.7	1.3	3.3	6.7	3.2	3.2	7.4	1.6	9.4	2.9	21.7	4.2
UR		2.9	7.7	4.5	1.6		7.3	7.3	14.8	4.8	6.5	11.8	8.6	12.2
RU	4.3	7.2	0.4	4.3	4.4	0.4	3.6	7.1	6	4.7	4.4	6.9	5	14
UU		4	7.9	6.9	2.5	7.9	3.8		2.9	12.1	3.4	7.9	16.3	8.3

Source : (Computed from ) Household survey data of NSSO 55<sup>th</sup> Round.



From the foregoing analysis it is clear that independent migration of females is on the increase in almost all the states in India and it is more pronounced in South India. Even for backward states the percentage of 'never married' is higher for all the three RR, RU, UU category of migrants. Females heading households is also on the increase. Due to rising cost of living and changing attitudes the custom of absorbing the widows either by parents or parents-in-law is on the decline. Migration is an escape route from poverty for such women. Migration also provides an opportunity to be free from the shackles of custom and tradition.

### **Employment Oriented Migration**

Let us consider long term migrants for whom the reasons for leaving the last usual place of residence are collected under the following heads: (a) in search of employment (b) in search of better employment (c) to take up employment/better employment (d) transfer of service /contract (e) proximity to place of work (f) studies (g) acquisition of own house/flat (h) housing problems (i) social/political problems (j) health (k) marriage (l) migration of parent/earning member of the family and (m) others. Since our aim here is to analyse only the employment oriented migration of females, in Table 6 data has been pooled and provided for five reasons only viz, in search of employment (which includes causes a to e above), studies, marriage, migration of parents/earning member and 'others'. Migration due to Housing, health and social/political problems are insignificant and hence omitted.

Employment oriented migration constitutes 3-4% while marriage is the predominant reason for migration for females.<sup>7</sup>

**Table 6**  
**Reasons for Migration for the Women in Migrant Households**  
**(For all streams of migrants) (Percent)**

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Major States	1,2,3,4,5 Empt	6 (Studies)	11(Marriage)	12 Mig of Parent/ earning member)	Others
<b>Central Region</b>					
Madhya Pradesh	1.8	0.2	88.8	7.2	2
Uttar Pradesh	0.9	0.1	91.2	5.7	2.1
<b>Northern Region</b>					
Haryana	1.1	0.2	85.5	10.5	2.7
Punjab	1.5	0.3	87.8	9	1.4
Rajasthan	1	0.3	87.2	9.8	1.7
<b>Western Region</b>					
Gujarat	1.6	0.4	82.1	13.5	2.4
Maharashtra	2.9	0.4	73.7	18.7	4.5
<b>Eastern Region</b>					
Bihar	1.3	0.1	94.1	3.6	0.9
Orissa	1.6	0.2	86.3	8.5	3.4
West Bengal	1.8	0.2	83.2	9.5	5.3
<b>Southern Region</b>					
Andhra Pradesh	3.6	0.5	71.1	20.4	4.4
Karnataka	3.4	0.7	79.9	11.8	4.2
Kerala	2.7	0.7	69.4	17.2	10
Tamil Nadu	3.3	0.6	73	17.5	5.6

**Note:** Reasons 1,2,3,4 and 5 stand for the following:

1-In search of employment ,2-in search of better employment, 3-to take up employment/better employment, 4- Transfer of service/contract, 5- proximity to place of work

The percentage will not add up to 100 since reasons such as 'acquisition of own house/flat' , 'housing problem' 'social and political problem' 'health problem' are not considered.

**Source :** (Computed from ) Household survey data of NSSO 55<sup>th</sup> Round

Data on migrants who mentioned 'employment' as the reason for migration for RR, RU, UU category is available in Table 7. The figures are uniformly low for all the states. But inter-category and inter-state variations are significant.

Among rural- rural migrants the percentage is high for Tamil Nadu (5.8%) and Maharashtra (4%). Haryana (3.1%) comes third followed by Karnataka (2.8%). Among Rural- Urban migrants Karnataka (6.9%) tops the list followed by A.P. (6.2%) and Tamil Nadu (3.8%). Among the UU migrants women's labour force participation seems to be low. Except for Haryana (7.9%) none of the other states (with the exception of Karnataka 5.4%) have significant percentage.

**Table 7**  
**Female Migrants Who Reported 'Employment' as the reason for migration (Percent)**

Cate gory	M.P	U.P	Hary ana	Punjab	Rajast han	Gujarat	Mahara shtra	Bihar	Orissa	West Bengal	Andhra Pradesh	Karna taka	Kerala	Tamil Nadu
<b>Intra-District</b>														
R-R	1.1	0.2		0.3	0.4	0.7	1.4	0.3	0.5	0.2	1.6	1.9	0.9	1.8
U-R	3.8	1.4				2.5	2.4	3.1	10.5	3	6.5	3.9	1	4.9
RU	2.1	1	1.1	2.1	1.4	1.1	4.4	2.1	3.7	2.2	4.9	4	2.1	2.9
U-U	2.2	1	4	0.7	2.5	4	2.4	3.7	3.3	1.1	4.3	3.8	1.4	2.1
<b>Inter-district</b>														
RR	1.6	2.1	0.5	0.6	0.2	1.2	2.9	0.3	1.3	0.8	3.2	2.9	5.6	1.6
UR	1.4	0.6			1.9		4.2	1		0.8	2.9		7.8	3.5
RU	4.8	2.6	0.2	0.9	3.9	0.2	3.4	2	5.7	6.9	7.8	4.2	5.4	4.5
UU	2.7	2.6	1.6	2.6	2.4	1.6	3	4	2.4	3.7	4.7	5.9	9.1	4.6
<b>From Other States</b>														
RR	1.3	1.1	3.1	0.6	0.7		4	4	1.1	1.6	1.4	2.8	6.6	
UR	17.7	2.2				9.1	9.8	9.8			26	7.8	4.3	
RU	1.4	4.2	2.4	3.5	1.2	2.4	3.3	3.6	6	2.8	6.2	6.9	3.3	5.8
UU	Nil	2.4	7.9	1	1.6	7.9	1.8	3.5	2.9	1.4	2.5	5.4	4.4	3.9

**Source:** (Computed from NSSO 55<sup>th</sup> Round Data)

**Table 8**  
**Labour Force Participation Behaviour of Women in Migrant Households for all streams of Migrants (Percent)**

State	Activity 11-81 Labour Force Participation			Attended school			Attended domestic Duties only			Domestic Duty Plus free Collection Of goods			Others		
	Pre	Post	Difference	Pre	Post	Difference	Pre	Post	Difference	Pre	Post	Difference	Pre	Post	Difference
Central Region															
M.P.	17	42	<b>25</b>	4.7	1	<b>-3.7</b>	66	41	<b>-25</b>	10.4	14.3	<b>4.1</b>	1.5	1.7	0.2
U.P.	5	19	<b>14</b>	4.6	1.1	<b>-3.5</b>	69	44	<b>-25</b>	19.3	34.2	<b>14.9</b>	1.5	1.4	-0.1
Northern Region															
Haryana	2	8	<b>6</b>	7.4	1.5	<b>-5.9</b>	52	33	<b>-19</b>	36.4	54.9	<b>18.5</b>	1.5	2.2	0.7
Punjab	4	8	<b>4</b>	3.9	1.3	<b>-2.6</b>	50	27	<b>-23</b>	42.5	61.5	<b>19</b>	1.2	1.8	0.6
Rajasthan	20	34	<b>14</b>	5.5	1.4	<b>-4.1</b>	44	28	<b>-16</b>	29.9	35.5	<b>5.6</b>	0.8	1.4	0.6
Western Region															
Gujarat	25	33	<b>8</b>	5.3	1.6	<b>-3.7</b>	60	48	<b>-12</b>	9.1	16.2	<b>7.1</b>	0.8	1.6	0.8
Maharashtra	25	42	<b>17</b>	9.5	2.2	<b>-7.3</b>	61	51	<b>-10</b>	2.6	2.9	<b>0.3</b>	2.3	1.6	-0.7
Eastern Region															
Bihar	3	19	<b>16</b>	5.1	0.7	<b>-4.4</b>	59	50	<b>-9</b>	24	29	<b>5</b>	8.3	1.9	-6.4
Orissa	14	24	<b>10</b>	2.9	1.2	<b>1.7</b>	70	52	<b>-18</b>	9.2	20.1	<b>10.9</b>	3.8	2.3	-1.5
West Bengal	3	15	<b>12</b>	7.9	1.1	<b>6.8</b>	63	44	<b>-19</b>	22.9	37.9	<b>15</b>	3.5	2	-1.5
Southern Region															
Andhra Pradesh	37	48	<b>11</b>	5.7	1.9	<b>-3.8</b>	53	45	<b>-8</b>	1.9	4	<b>2.1</b>	3	1.7	-1.3
Karnataka	17	43	<b>25</b>	4.8	1.6	<b>-3.2</b>	73	48	<b>-25</b>	2.7	6.9	<b>4.2</b>	1.8	1.1	-0.7
Kerala	17	26	<b>9</b>	10	3.1	<b>-7.2</b>	68	63	<b>-5</b>	1.6	6.9	<b>5.3</b>	2.9	1.3	-1.6
Tamil Nadu	28	42	<b>14</b>	5.1	1.5	<b>3.6</b>	61	46	<b>15</b>	4.3	8.8	<b>4.5</b>	2.1	1.7	-0.4

**Note:** Activity Status 11-81 are as follows: 11- Own Account Worker (Worked in Household Enterprise- Self Employed), 12-Employer, 21-Unpaid Family Worker (Worked as helper in household enterprise), 31- Worked as Regular , Salaried /Wage Employee, 41- Worked as Casual Wage Labourer in Public Works, 51- Worked as Casual Labour in other types of work , 81-Did not work but was seeking and or available for work,

**Source:** (Computed from Household Survey data of) NSSO 55<sup>th</sup> Round

The inter-state variations in employment oriented migration and female selective migration are quite understandable. Women development is not uniform through-out the country. Whether a woman participates in migration or not depends on her (a) social role (b) capacity for making decisions and exerting autonomy (c) access to resources and (d) existing gender stratification in origin and destination areas. It involves dealing with four questions (a) How do the potential for and processes of migration are affected by the expectations, relationships and hierarchies associated with being female or male? (which again varies with class/caste) (b) How does gender inequality in the receiving societies (urban in the case of rural-urban migration and another country in the context of international migration) affect the experiences of migrant women and men? (c) What are the ways in which migrants –women and men-benefit or disadvantage and (d) If opportunities and outcomes should be equal for both men and women what steps must be taken? Unfortunately neither research studies on migration nor the policy planners focus on these issues.

As far as NSSO data is concerned since only one reason is to be specified and very often women shift their residence only at the time of marriage, their movement is identified with marriage.<sup>8</sup> But these women might have worked earlier in their native place and continue to work after marriage at the place of destination. Since their work is often irregular and least paid they are not considered as 'workers' at all. These women very often do not stop with playing

the role of a housewife but contribute substantially for family survival in the form of unpaid and paid work or free collection of fuel fodder vegetables etc. Survival at the lower rung of the population group is unimaginable without the contribution of women .So it becomes imperative to study the labour force participation behaviour of migrant women whatever may be the reason given by them for migration. Subsequent tables will illustrate the fact that in all the states in the post migration stage women's labour force participation goes up. Inter- state variations are glaring in female migration the southern states exhibiting much better status for women in terms of their mobility and labour force participation.

A comparison of pre-and post migration work status of women of working age 15-60 is given in Table 8. Labour force participation (LFP) after migration moves up steeply though again inter-state variations are visible. The percentage change in post migration period may vary from state to state but not a single state has witnessed a fall in the labour force participation of women in the post migration period. The following observations are worth considering.

- The pre migration LFP of women is very low in the case of Haryana, Punjab, West Bengal, Bihar and U.P. High LFP behaviour in the pre migration status is witnessed among Andhra Pradesh (36.8%), Tamil Nadu (27.6%) Gujarat (25.3%) and Maharashtra (25.0%) in the descending order. The other states witness 11-19% of LFP among women.

- In the post migration period highest LFP among women is found in Andhra Pradesh (47.6) Karnataka (42.6) Madhya Pradesh (42.3) Tamil Nadu (42.1) Gujarat (32.9) Rajasthan (33.6) Kerala (25.8) and Orissa (24.4). U.P. and West Bengal have 15-17%. The lowest figures are found for Haryana (8.4) and Punjab (8.4).

If we compare the increase in the labour force participation behaviour of women between the pre and post period then the highest increase in LFP has occurred in Karnataka (25), M.P (25), Maharashtra (17), Bihar (15), Tamil Nadu (14) and Rajasthan (14).

- Out of four southern states three states stand out with more than 40% LFP in the post migration period.
- In Bihar though the increase is high the post LFP is only 19%. Among the backward States except U.P. and Bihar the other states have good LFP of women in the post-migration period, MP having 42% Rajasthan 34% and Orissa 24%.
- Contrary to our expectation in West Bengal labour force participation of females in the post migration period is only 15%.
- Among the developed States Gujarat and Maharashtra have high LFP among women both in the pre and post period and Haryana and Punjab least LFP.

With increase in LFP we find a corresponding decline in 'attending domestic duties Only' in all the states. The category of "Attended School" also shows a fall in the post migration period. This goes to prove that even girls in the age group of 15 who were in school prior to migration are put into the labour market after migration and hence for all the states uniformly we find a fall in the post migration period. The fall is high in Maharashtra (7.3) Kerala (7.2) and West Bengal (6.8).



Table 9

**Attended to domestic duties only (Code 92) i.e. No work participation for RR RU and UU Migrant  
Streams (Percent)**

Category	M.P	U.P	Haryana	Punjab	Rajasthan	Gujarat	Maharashtra	Bihar	Orissa	West Bengal	Andhra pradesh	Karnataka	Kerala	Tamil Nadu
<b>RR (intra district)</b>														
Pre	60.5	66.8	44.9	51.5	37.5	43.3	47.7	56.8	67	59.7	42.3	68.1	73.5	49.9
Post	26	39.1	21	21.7	18.9	24.7	24.8	42	45.9	31.7	28.4	32.3	65.6	27.1
increase/ decrease	<b>-34.5</b>	<b>-27.7</b>	<b>-23.9</b>	<b>-29.8</b>	<b>-18.6</b>	<b>-18.6</b>	<b>-22.9</b>	<b>-14.8</b>	<b>-21.1</b>	<b>-28</b>	<b>-13.9</b>	<b>-35.8</b>	<b>-7.9</b>	<b>-22.8</b>
<b>RR (inter-district)</b>														
Pre	68.4	71.9	46.6	44.1	36.7	40.7	45.5	59.8	71.6	60.3	52.9	68.9	62.7	58.8
Post	30.4	41.8	24	20.1	17.8	27.6	28.6	48.7	46	36.7	43.6	39.1	58.3	36.3
increase/ decrease	<b>-38</b>	<b>-30.1</b>	<b>-22.6</b>	<b>-24</b>	<b>-18.9</b>	<b>-13.1</b>	<b>-16.9</b>	<b>-11.1</b>	<b>-25.6</b>	<b>-23.6</b>	<b>-9.3</b>	<b>-29.8</b>	<b>-4.4</b>	<b>-22.5</b>
<b>RU (intra district)</b>														
Pre	66.8	73.2	69.2	53.5	55.9	63	66.6	68.5	79.7	66.1	58	77.5	68.6	69.1
Post	51.1	56.8	61.9	31.3	46	37.5	66.9	65.1	72.2	53.1	60	62.3	65.3	55.6
increase/ decrease	<b>-15.7</b>	<b>-16.4</b>	<b>-7.3</b>	<b>-22.2</b>	<b>-9.9</b>	<b>25.5</b>	<b>0.3</b>	<b>-3.1</b>	<b>-7.5</b>	<b>-13</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>-15.2</b>	<b>-3.3</b>	<b>-13.5</b>
<b>RU (inter-district)</b>														
Pre	77.4	75.4	73.1	46.1	56.4	73.1	73.9	65.1	76	66.8	62.8	85.6	66.9	69.1
Post	67.5	54.9	74.6	30	48.9	74.6	76.3	63.5	77.2	63.9	66.4	72.6	56	62.8
increase/decrease	<b>-9.9</b>	<b>-20.5</b>	<b>1.5</b>	<b>-16.1</b>	<b>-7.5</b>	<b>1.5</b>	<b>2.4</b>	<b>-1.6</b>	<b>1.2</b>	<b>-2.9</b>	<b>3.6</b>	<b>-13</b>	<b>-10.9</b>	<b>-6.3</b>
<b>UU (intra district)</b>														
Pre	76.4	74.5	81.1	62.3	58.6	81.1	70.7	65.2	84	68.4	69.5	80.4	61.5	74.4
Post	69.4	60.2	70	40	50.8	70	72.6	71.3	77.3	60.8	63.1	69.4	58.9	66.7
increase/decrease	<b>-7</b>	<b>-14.3</b>	<b>-11.1</b>	<b>-22.3</b>	<b>-7.8</b>	<b>-11.1</b>	<b>1.9</b>	<b>6.1</b>	<b>-6.7</b>	<b>-8.4</b>	<b>-6.4</b>	<b>-11</b>	<b>-2.6</b>	<b>-7.7</b>
<b>UU (inter district)</b>														
Pre	73.4	64.2	82.8	46.8	54.5	82.8	67.5	57	74	65.6	71.7	78.7	49.3	67.5
Post	75.4	53.7	82.4	36.7	41.3	82.4	73.7	72.6	75.6	65.2	72.1	68.4	49.3	63.5
Increase/decrease	<b>2</b>	<b>-10.5</b>	<b>-0.4</b>	<b>-10.1</b>	<b>-13.2</b>	<b>-0.4</b>	<b>6.2</b>	<b>15.6</b>	<b>1.6</b>	<b>-0.4</b>	<b>0.4</b>	<b>-10.3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-4</b>

Source: (Computed from Household Survey data of) NSSO 55<sup>th</sup> Round

**Table 10**  
**Own Account Worker (Code 11) (Percent)**

Category	M.P	U.P	Haryana	Punjab	Rajasthan	Gujarat	Maharashtra	Bihar	Orissa	West Bengal	Andhra Pradesh	Karnataka	Kerala	Tamil Nadu
<b>RR (intra district)</b>														
Pre	0.5	0.6	0.5	0.7	0.8	0.6	1.9	0.5	0.6	0.8	2.5	1.6	2.1	3
Post	2.2	6.1	1.2	1.5	8.8	4.7	5	3.4	2.6	3.8	4.5	4.4	4.3	8.3
Increase/decrease	<b>1.7</b>	<b>5.5</b>	<b>0.7</b>	<b>0.8</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>4.1</b>	<b>3.1</b>	<b>2.9</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2.8</b>	<b>2.2</b>	<b>5.3</b>
<b>RR (inter-district)</b>														
Pre	0.3	0.3	0.5	0.4	0.9	0.5	0.8	0.3	1.9	0.6	1.8	0.8	2.3	1.3
Post	2.4	3.8	1.7	2.4	7.6	5.4	2.5	3.5	4.5	3	3.4	2.6	4.9	3.7
Increase/decrease	<b>2.1</b>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>1.2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>6.7</b>	<b>4.9</b>	<b>1.7</b>	<b>3.2</b>	<b>2.6</b>	<b>2.4</b>	<b>1.6</b>	<b>1.8</b>	<b>2.6</b>	<b>2.4</b>
<b>RU (intra district)</b>														
Pre	0.5	0.9	0.6	0.8	0.5	0.6	0.7	0.3	0.5	0.5	2.7	1.6	2.6	3
Post	2.5	3.4	3.5	1.7	5.1	3.5	4.9	3.3	2.1	6.4	4.3	5.9	5.9	6.7
Increase/decrease	<b>2</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>2.9</b>	<b>0.9</b>	<b>4.6</b>	<b>2.9</b>	<b>4.2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1.6</b>	<b>5.9</b>	<b>1.6</b>	<b>4.3</b>	<b>3.3</b>	<b>3.7</b>
<b>RU (inter-district)</b>														
Pre	0.8	0.1	0.2	—	0.2	0.2	0.7	—	1.1	0.8	2	0.7	2.1	1.4
Post	4.5	2.3	5.1	2.6	2.1	5.1	4.3	2	0.4	2.9	3.4	4.6	2.5	4.1
Increase/decrease	<b>3.7</b>	<b>2.2</b>	<b>4.9</b>	<b>2.6</b>	<b>1.9</b>	<b>4.9</b>	<b>3.6</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>-0.7</b>	<b>2.1</b>	<b>1.4</b>	<b>3.9</b>	<b>0.4</b>	<b>2.7</b>
<b>UU (intra district)</b>														
Pre	1.4	1.1	0.3	0.5	1.1	0.3	1	0.7	Nil	0.8	2	2.6	2.3	2.8
Post	3.4	2.6	0.8	2.3	4.6	0.8	4.8	2	Nil	2.8	4.1	6.8	4.9	6.2
Increase/decrease	<b>2</b>	<b>1.5</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>1.8</b>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>3.8</b>	<b>1.3</b>	<b>Nil</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2.1</b>	<b>4.2</b>	<b>2.6</b>	<b>3.4</b>
<b>UU (inter district)</b>														
Pre	1	0.2	0.8	—	0.4	0.8	1.1	0.6	Nil	0.4	0.2	0.4	0.7	1.4
Post	1.7	1.8	2	1.6	3.3	2	4.3	1.9	Nil	3	2.1	2.5	1.4	—
Increase/decrease	<b>0.7</b>	<b>1.6</b>	<b>1.2</b>	<b>1.6</b>	<b>2.9</b>	<b>1.2</b>	<b>3.2</b>	<b>1.3</b>	<b>Nil</b>	<b>2.6</b>	<b>1.9</b>	<b>2.1</b>	<b>0.7</b>	<b>-1.4</b>

**Source:** (Computed from Household Survey data of) NSSO 55<sup>th</sup> Round

Table 11

## Working as Casual labourer (other than in public works) (Code 51) (Percent)

Category	M.P	U.P	Har yana	Punjab	Rajastha n	Gujarat	Mahara shtra	Bihar	Orissa	West Bengal	Andhra Pradesh	Karnat aka	Kerala	Tamil Nadu
<b>RR (intra district)</b>														
Pre	12.3	1.6	0.5	0.3	2.1	16.7	24.2	2.3	10.4	0.8	33.2	14.8	5.1	27.5
Post	21.4	6.3	2.6	1.8	4.1	19.7	32.3	11.3	13.6	7.1	31.4	25.9	7.5	28.5
increase/decrease	<b>9.1</b>	<b>4.7</b>	<b>2.1</b>	<b>1.5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>8.1</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>3.2</b>	<b>6.3</b>	<b>-1.8</b>	<b>11.1</b>	<b>2.4</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>RR (inter-district)</b>														
Pre	8.5	1.2	0.4	0.2	1.7	15.5	29.5	2.4	8.4	1.8	27.7	13.2	3.9	27.2
Post	21.4	3.8	0.8	0.6	2.7	16.6	34.4	7.8	16.3	4	25.7	24.1	6.3	27.5
increase/decrease	<b>12.9</b>	<b>1.6</b>	<b>0.4</b>	<b>0.4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1.1</b>	<b>4.9</b>	<b>5.4</b>	<b>7.9</b>	<b>2.2</b>	<b>-2</b>	<b>10.9</b>	<b>2.4</b>	<b>0.3</b>
<b>RU (intra district)</b>														
Pre	9.5	0.5	9.6		2.7	9.6	10.1	1.1	3.9	0.3	18.2	5.9	3.9	10.6
Post	13.8	2.1	9.8	1.5	3.2	9.8	9.5	4.9	6.2	4.3	10.9	12.2	4.1	8.4
increase/decrease	<b>4.3</b>	<b>1.6</b>	<b>0.2</b>	<b>1.5</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>0.2</b>	<b>-0.6</b>	<b>3.8</b>	<b>2.3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>-7.3</b>	<b>6.3</b>	<b>0.2</b>	<b>-2.2</b>
<b>RU (inter-district)</b>														
Pre	3.5	0.1	5.4	0.3		5.4	6.6	0.9	2.3	0.4	13.6	3.2	0.7	10.8
Post	4.6	0.6	4.9	0.9	2.7	4.9	4.8	3.1	3	1.8	9.8	7.4	4.2	6.8
increase/decrease	<b>1.1</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>-0.5</b>	<b>0.6</b>	<b>2.7</b>	<b>-0.5</b>	<b>-1.8</b>	<b>2.2</b>	<b>0.7</b>	<b>1.4</b>	<b>-3.8</b>	<b>4.2</b>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>-4</b>
<b>UU (intra district)</b>														
Pre	0.4	0.8	1		0.7	1	1.9	0.7	1.7	0.6	3.8	2.8	3.5	2.1
Post	4.4	0.7	3.5	0.7	1.6	3.5	3.3	2	5	1	4.8	4.3	4	2.1
increase/decrease	<b>4</b>	<b>0.1</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>0.7</b>	<b>0.9</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>1.4</b>	<b>1.3</b>	<b>3.3</b>	<b>0.4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1.5</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>UU (inter district)</b>														
Pre	0.8	0.6	0.6	0.8		0.6	1				1.0	0.8		2
Post	2.4	0.1	2.7	0.2	0.2	2.7	1.4	0.3	1.6	1.1	1.4	1.3	2.1	0
Increase/decrease	<b>1.6</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>2.1</b>	<b>-0.6</b>	<b>0.2</b>	<b>1.9</b>	<b>0.4</b>	<b>0.3</b>	<b>1.6</b>	<b>1.1</b>	<b>0.4</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>2.1</b>	<b>2</b>

Source: (Computed from Household Survey data of) NSSO 55<sup>th</sup> Round

**Table 12**  
**Attended to domestic duties and free collection of goods (Code 93) (Percent)**

Category	M.P	U.P	Haryana	Punjab	Rajasthan	Guja rat	Mahara sh	Bihar	Orissa	West Bengal	Andhra Pradesh	Karnat aka	Kerala	Tamil Nadu
<b>RR (intra district)</b>														
Pre	13	22.3	49.2	43.6	33.1	13.6	4.3	28.5	16.3	30.2	2.8	4.3	1.2	7.1
Post	14.5	34.2	68.7	70	35	22.9	4.7	33.8	24.6	49.8	4.7	9.9	8.2	12.5
increase/decrease	<b>1.5</b>	<b>11.9</b>	<b>19.5</b>	<b>26.4</b>	<b>1.9</b>	<b>9.3</b>	<b>0.4</b>	<b>5.3</b>	<b>13.3</b>	<b>19.6</b>	<b>1.9</b>	<b>5.6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7.4</b>
<b>RR (inter-district)</b>														
Pre	12	20.1	47.5	53	36	18.4	6.3	25.8	10.8	28.1	1.4	5.2	3.7	3.3
Post	19.8	39.8	68.2	72.6	39.7	29.4	4.6	29.4	23.2	47.5	4	8.5	10.6	11.1
increase/decrease	<b>7.8</b>	<b>19.7</b>	<b>20.7</b>	<b>19.6</b>	<b>3.7</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>-1.7</b>	<b>3.6</b>	<b>12.4</b>	<b>19.4</b>	<b>2.6</b>	<b>3.3</b>	<b>6.9</b>	<b>7.8</b>
<b>RU (intra district)</b>														
Pre	10.9	15.6	8.3	38.7	21.7	8.3	1.6	11.9	2.6	19.4	0	1.7	1.1	3.3
Post	13.3	26.3	13.3	52.6	31.4	13.3	2.1	17.2	6.5	24.6	2.2	4.6	5	6.6
increase/decrease	<b>3.3</b>	<b>10.7</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>13.9</b>	<b>9.7</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>5.3</b>	<b>3.9</b>	<b>5.2</b>	<b>2.2</b>	<b>2.9</b>	<b>3.9</b>	<b>3.3</b>
<b>RU (inter-district)</b>														
Pre	7.8	15.9	4.8	45.8	25.1	4.8	1	14.6	1.1	12.1	0.9	0.4	1.4	3.6
Post	10.2	33.6	4.9	53.9	35.2	4.9	1.1	19.2	3.4	17	2.2	2.8	3.9	4.9
increase/decrease	<b>2.4</b>	<b>17.7</b>	<b>0.1</b>	<b>8.1</b>	<b>10.1</b>	<b>0.1</b>	<b>0.1</b>	<b>4.6</b>	<b>2.3</b>	<b>4.9</b>	<b>1.3</b>	<b>2.4</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>1.3</b>
<b>UU (intra district)</b>														
Pre	5.7	9.2	1.7	26.9	18.3	1.7	0.4	6.5	0.8	12.2	2	0	3	1.9
Post	10.8	21.5	7.6	46.4	26.3	7.6	1	12.3	4.2	22.7	5.4	2.1	7	5.8
increase/decrease	<b>5.1</b>	<b>12.3</b>	<b>5.9</b>	<b>19.5</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>5.9</b>	<b>0.6</b>	<b>5.8</b>	<b>3.4</b>	<b>10.5</b>	<b>3.4</b>	<b>2.1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3.9</b>
<b>UU (inter district)</b>														
Pre	2.2	13.8	0.6	36.5	24	0.6	0	14.6	3.9	10.4	0.4	0	1.4	2
Post	8.3	33.1	3.6	45.4	39.3	3.6	0.9	17.4	5.5	19.3	1.6	3.2	6.3	3.8
Increase/decrease	<b>6.1</b>	<b>19.3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>8.9</b>	<b>15.3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0.9</b>	<b>2.8</b>	<b>1.6</b>	<b>8.9</b>	<b>1.2</b>	<b>3.2</b>	<b>4.9</b>	<b>1.8</b>

**Source:** (Computed from Household Survey data of) NSSO 55<sup>th</sup> Round

The percentage of women in the next category of 'Attended to domestic duties plus free collection of goods' (collection of firewood, of vegetables, roots, cattle feed etc) is high in states like Haryana and Punjab where women's LFP is very low. This means in these two states though women do not opt for wage work may be due to cultural reasons, do play an active role in family survival or in supplementing family income through free collection of goods. In the poorer states of Rajasthan (35.5%) and U.P (34.2%) also women's proportion in free collection of goods for household consumption in addition to regular domestic work is high. West Bengal also exhibits a higher percentage (37.9).

We get better insights when we segregate the female migrants as RR, RU and UU to analyse their pre-post economic activity status. (Tables 9, 10, 11, 12) Since women are predominantly found in 'own account workers' category, 'casual labourer' category and 'Free collection of goods in addition to domestic duties' we have restricted our analysis to these three categories only. State wise analysis runs as follows:

**Madhya Pradesh:** Except for UU category in all other categories there is a fall (very high fall in RR) for those who attended to domestic duties only. They have got shifted more to casual labourer category than 'own account worker' category. The percentage of women in 'free collection of goods in addition to domestic duties ' also goes up.

**Uttar Pradesh:** Unlike in M.P. women as own account workers and as casual labourers constitute a small proportion both for pre and post periods though the percentage goes up in the post period. The fall in the percentage of women who attended to 'domestic duties only' in the post migration period gets absorbed in the allied category of 'attended to domestic duties and free collection of goods'.

**Haryana:** The percentage of women who attend to domestic duties only goes up in the case of UU migrant women, indicating their withdrawal from labour force after marriage with their movement to urban area. While the percentage of women who attend to both domestic duties and free collection is nearly 50% in the pre migration period and 68% in the post migration period for RR female migrant it is hardly 5% for RU and UU migrants.

**Punjab:** The percentage of women (both for pre and post migration status) in the 'attended to domestic duties only' is very high. The fall in percentage in the post migration period has almost completely been absorbed in the category of 'attended to domestic duties and free collection of goods' and not in 'own account workers' or 'casual labourer' categories.

**Rajasthan:** Unlike in Punjab in the 'own account workers' category the percentage of women goes up substantially in the post migration period. Otherwise the characteristics of women migrants is the same as that found for Punjab.

**Gujarat:** A sizable percentage of women move from 'attended to domestic duties only' category to 'attended domestic duties and free collection of goods' category in the post migration period especially among the RR migrants. The percentage of women engaged in casual labour among RR migrants is around 16% which goes up in the post migration period. RR and UU migrants confine themselves mostly to domestic duties only.

**Maharashtra:** While RR migrants exhibit high work participation especially in the casual labourer category and to a minor extent in own account work, three fourth of RU and UU migrant women confine themselves to domestic duties only. Around 4% are engaged in own account work.

**Bihar:** The percentage for own account workers and casual labourer goes up in the post period substantially for RR migrants.

**Orissa:** Again RR migrant women exhibit better work participation when compared to women of RU and UU movers.

**West Bengal:** The fall in the category of confined to domestic duties only gets mostly absorbed in the associate category of 'attended to domestic duties and free collection of goods' . The increase in own account worker category in the post period is appreciable when compared to the increase among casual labourers category.

**Andhra Pradesh:** Labour force participation is exceptionally high among RR migrant women both prior to and after migration. Except for UU migrants there is a decline in the post period for casual labourers for RR and RU migrants and this indicates that casual wage work is available more in the rural area than in the urban area, may be due to lack of information on the availability of jobs and distance. But this fall is compensated by an increase in own account worker group.

**Karnataka:** Work participation among RU and UU migrant women is very less. Among RR it is medium. Among casual labourers the percentage increase in the post period is quite high for RR migrants.

**Kerala:** 60-70% are confined to domestic duties only for UU migrant women this being only 50%. Rural urban behavioural differences are less.

**Tamil Nadu:** When compared to other states high work participation is found among RR migrant women. There is heavy decline in the post migration period in the category of women who attended to domestic duties only. The percentage increase in own account workers in the post period is quite appreciable (exception being UU migrant women).



From the above it is clear that,

- a. Women dominate in casual wage work in rural migration.
- b. Women in RU and UU migration stream opt for own account work.
- c. The percentage of women both prior to and after migration is quite high in 'attended to domestic duties and free collection of goods' category in Haryana, Punjab, Rajasthan, Bihar, Orissa, U.P. and West Bengal especially among RR migrants.
- d. Despite inter state variations in the magnitude of work participation, in all the states though the reason for migration is mentioned as 'marriage' by 90% of the migrant women, their economic activity pattern clearly indicates that they had been working prior to marriage and after marriage in the post migration period the percentage goes up.
- e. Haryana though exhibits high rural-urban and urban-urban migration among its women, the labour force participation as such is low in this state. So migration is due to other reasons than employment. In states where the percentage of employment oriented migration is low, a high percentage increase is found in the category of 'attended to domestic duties plus free collection of goods' in the post period indicating the indirect economic contribution of women.

Migration is generally expected to have empowering impact on women in terms of increased labour force participation, decline in fertility, economic independence and higher self esteem. But this does not always happen. Female rural to urban migrants continue to be vulnerable to gender based discrimination in wages and labour market segmentation which reserve the most repetitive, unskilled, monotonous jobs for women. They mostly work in the informal sector and experience long working hours for a very low

wage, un-healthy or dangerous working conditions, and psychological, physical and sexual aggression. While men normally work in groups women go for individualized work environments (eg. Domestic service) where there is greater isolation with the least possibility of establishing networks of information and social support. So measures designed to 'protect' migrants must be accompanied by measures that empower them.

In a hierarchical society like India where other factors such as marital status and age are as important as economic earnings in influencing women's status, it is not clear whether the independent movement of women to cities and employment in industrial units has helped to gain autonomy and empowerment. One study carried out in Sri Lanka on women employed in garments, coir, electronics, tobacco and construction comes to the conclusion that subcontracting has led to invisibility of these women workers who are at the bottom of the employment hierarchy, lack of recognition of their rights and instability of employment. These women choose to support their families in low waged work since the only other alternative is unemployment and consequent dire poverty. Similar studies in India reveal health hazards due to unpleasant working conditions, worsening of work burden on women and increased risk to sexual harassment (Ghosh, 2001 and Swaminathan, 2002, 2004) Migrant women who opt for self employment as vendors and service providers remain invisible in official labour statistics and hence are unprotected by national labour legislations.

## Issues

The issues to be addressed by policy planners are:

- a. How safe are the autonomous female migrants? Do they fall prey in the hands of traffickers? Have they benefited due to migration? Would they prefer to go back if employment opportunities cease to exist in the destination area?
- b. In the case of associational migrants, are they overburdened with work in the absence of traditional kith and kin support systems in the destination area? Do the men share the household chores? Do the women get toilet facility in the destination area? How do they perceive their new role-empowering or disempowering?
- c. In the case of male migration and family left behind in the rural area how do the women cope with the farm /non farm work in the village? Are the remittances adequate? Do they work to supplement the meager remittances and if so how are they valued for their contribution? How do they perceive the change? What happens to those households where the males have severed their connections with the rural household and remarried in the destination area to form a new household?
- d. What happens to the elderly especially the female elderly who are left behind in the village of origin in majority of the above cases?
- e. Do these migrant women have control over their earnings?

**Conclusion**

Micro level case studies indicate high levels of rural urban migration among females for reasons of employment. Secondary data analysis though indicative of this trend does not help us to arrive at the magnitude of such migration. Moreover, unlike in earlier years where male selective migration was predominant, the latest trend is one of family migration where both the male and female migrate, irrespective of the fact whether female employment opportunity is reckoned or not at the time of making a move. But women's labour force participation after migration steeply increases and this is evident from the NSSO 55<sup>th</sup> round data. In view of rising urban-ward migration and increased labour force participation of women after migration, questions related to sanitation water housing educational and infrastructural needs require greater attention at the level of policy planning and implementation. Since women are a highly heterogeneous group migration among females should not only be understood as a poverty reducing strategy but also as a strategy of economic diversification , upward mobility and desire for personal growth and autonomy. Micro level case studies are warranted to understand the intricacies involved in female migration.

### Foot Notes

- 1.The situation is more pronounced at the international level especially in the developing countries of South East and Central Asia as the following table illustrates:

Country	Total Annual Migration outflows	Women's share in migration outflows (%)	Total Stock of Migrants abroad (millions)
Philippines	250,000	58	6.5
Sri Lanka	163,000	79	1.2
Indonesia	121,000	68	1.9
Bangladesh	210,000	0.5	2.0
India	415,000	10	1.4
Pakistan	130,000	1	3.1

**Source:** As cited in Oishi Nana 2002 'Gender and Migration: An Integrative Approach' The Center for Comparative Immigration Studies , Working paper no 49 March, University of California San Diego p-5.

- 2.".....rapid economic change may create a situation where traditional roles for women no longer fit their current life. The necessity or desire for young women to leave home to work elsewhere means that they may spend their adolescent years living far from their families. While young men had always been permitted and even encouraged to have a social life outside the family, girls were socialized to remain close to home and to fulfil many family obligations. When these obligations shift to providing economic support to rural parents who desperately need outside income or to providing educational funds for

younger siblings, young women may migrate alone to work without the protection and support of their parents" (Whitemann Barbara 2003 'Passive Asian Female: Myth and Migration' University of Leicester Press Release No 115 May p-4).

3. The conceptual framework to analyse female migration behaviour as developed by Thadani and Todaro calls for judicious combination of quantitative as well as qualitative information. In their model, migration of women (both unattached and associational) irrespective of their education is assumed to be determined jointly by economic and social forces while being constrained by cultural, sex-role prescriptions.
4. In the context of India it is felt that 'autonomy' is a class bound concept and refers to the rights and privileges enjoyed by some upper middle class and rich women in shaping their career and future life. In the case of poor women 'survival' is the foremost criterion for migration and realization of 'self worth' or improving one's own status are unrealizable dreams.
5. Migrant workers form a significant proportion in export oriented industries. Refer to Neetha, .N 2001 "Gender and Technology: Impact of Flexible Organisation and Production on Female Labour in the Tiruppur Knitwear Industry' National Labour Institute R.S.No 020/2001.

6. A study on domestic workers by Neetha comes to the conclusion that migration for domestic service is largely a female driven phenomenon based on personal and social relationships. Social networking, largely female centered, influences migration decisions, the process of migration and also the day to day lives of the migrants. Refer Neetha, .N 2002 'Migration Social Networking and Employment: A Study of Domestic Workers in Delhi'. NLI R.S.No 037/2002
  
7. A case study on migrants to Delhi sponsored by UNESCO indicates that a majority of the autonomous female migrants to Delhi were never married young women of less than 25 years of age. Although employment or education was the main reason, "marriage" was cited as the underlying factor for migration. (NIUA 1992 'Single women migrant workers in an Asian Metropolis: A Case Study of Delhi' Sponsored by UNESCO, Bangkok)
  
8. Even in the case of marriage migration there is a change in the composition. Skeldon (1985) is of the view that geographical spread of Indian marriage fields has increased. (Skeldon, .R 1983 'Migration in South Asia: An Over-view' Bangkok ESCAP). According to another study which compares 1981 and 1991 census data of the proportion of the females who mentioned 'marriage' as the reason for migration concludes that there is significant increase in intra-district , inter-district and inter-state migration (Singh, D.P., 1998 'Internal Migration in India 1961-1991' Demography India Vol. 27, No.1, pp.245-261).

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